

May 20, 2002

Reading First Initiative
Mr. Chris Doherty, Director
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Mr. Doherty:

I am pleased to offer my support to the Mississippi Department of Education's *Reading First* application.

Mississippi has laid a strong foundation for education and desires to continue to take sound and innovative measures to strengthen the schools within our state. Mississippi's efforts to improve reading instruction began in 1997 with the initiation of the Mississippi Reading Reform Model. Our efforts were aided by the federal implementation of *Reading Excellence. No Child Left Behind* will allow Mississippi to extend its efforts and continue to work toward its goal of "Every Child A Reader."

Making education work in Mississippi demands cooperation. My office is committed to working with the United States Department of Education and the Mississippi Department of Education to enable all of Mississippi's children to meet state and national standards for reading.

I believe that Mississippi's *Reading First* application is worthy of your resources. Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr